

Mayor's Council on Disability  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 2, 2009

Chairperson, John Jackson, Creative Initiative  
Vice Chair, Bryon Kluesner, UTC OSD Office  
Secretary, Carol Martin, UTK Office of Disability & Employment  
Parliamentarian, Jill Hindman, Dev Disability Council, Region 3

Council Members

Sandra Booher, Moccasin Bend Hospital  
Jim Queen, CARTA Care-A-Van  
Tommy Gates, Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation  
Carolyn Boyd, Signal Centers  
Phillip Stevens, City of Chattanooga  
Karl Epperson  
Nichol Myers, AIM Center  
Robert White, Epilepsy Foundation  
Katie Jones, Merrill Lynch (Special Needs)

Mayor's Office Participants

Matt Lea, Assistant to Mayor  
Jay Piercy, OMA City Compliance Officer  
Kathie Fulgham, Mayor's Office

Absent members:

Sandy Booher  
Nichol Myers  
Katie Jones

Visitors:

Chris Jackson, TN DIDS  
Bryan Berkley, UTC Student  
Holly Zuckerman, UTC Alumni, OSD Staff  
Danielle Hooper, CABIA  
Dennis Dodson, Mental Health Advocate  
Constance Ruff, Southside Chamber President  
Greg Helms, Hamilton Cnty Emergency Mgmt  
Greg Smith, Hamilton Cnty Emergency Mgmt  
State Senator Andy Berke

John welcomed the group and asked the Council members to introduce themselves. He then asked the group if they had any changes or corrections to the September minutes. The Council approved the minutes as submitted.

John asked Bryon Kluesner for an update on UTC's October Disability Awareness activities. Bryon discussed the Dialogue in the Dark experience in Atlanta. All participants were given a cane and taken into a totally dark room where they experience five different scenarios as an individual with a visual impairment and with total blindness. John introduced two students that attended –Bryan Barkley and Holly Zuckerman. He said it was suggested that the MCD and possibly even the Mayor experience this to enhance their understanding of visual disabilities.

Bryon also discussed the Silent Basket Auction that raised \$4,000 for the trip to Scotland, England and Ireland. He said there is a lot more fundraising in the future. He showed a Christmas ornament that will have a picture of the Edinburgh Castle on it. This ornament will be used as a future fundraiser.

He thanked all that supported UTC's efforts in October and specifically Lana Newton and Terri Rice who brought scones and other food from England to one of the trip planning meetings. He said there are only three spots left open for this trip, an 11 day trip that will cost individuals only \$3,300. This price includes two airline fares, an overnight train ride in a sleeper train, a ferry ride, all hotels, two meals a day and the attractions that are pre-scheduled.

There was discussion about the accessibility of the castles. According to Bryon, the last trip had only one accessibility issue and that was in New Zealand in the caves.

Bryon said that it was suggested that the MCD and the Mayor watch the documentary of last year's trip. Matt Lea said that the Mayor's conference room could be made available for viewing this. He said the Mayor would more than likely take the DVD home to view.

Matt also mentioned that although it may not be feasible to get the Mayor and the MCD down to Atlanta for the Dialogue in the Dark experience, he felt that it may possibly be reproduced in Chattanooga, perhaps at the Creative Discovery Museum.

Carol Martin said the committee was making good progress on the disABILITY in the Workplace/9<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Program scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Bessie Smith Cultural Center. She said that Matt Lea had requested that the Mayor welcome the group. There will be 13 people with disabilities receiving awards in the Awards portion of the event. There will be an employer panel of 8 and an employee panel of 8. The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities will be shown. This will be followed by a Who Wants to be a Millionaire skit put together by Terri Rice and Jennifer Nichols from Signal Center. We have asked an attorney from Miller and Martin to give a brief presentation of the updates to the ADA. And, the Assistive Technology group from Signal Centers will present some of the latest devices. Our next committee meeting will be in the Board Room at Signal Centers this Thursday at 2:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to attend is welcome.

Jill Hindman announced that the Region 3 Planning Council for the Developmental Disabilities Council will be meeting this Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the AIM Center. Everyone is welcome.

Jim Queen, CARTA discussed the Tennessee Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting in Nashville. This group includes major urban and rural transportation providers in Tennessee. There were participants from TDOT and FTA. The discussion focused on stimulus monies and some other funds that are being extended monthly and hopefully quarterly and further. There was a lot of discussion on the coordinated transportation effort with people from TDOT. They were supportive and anxious to learn more. This meeting also included the annual rodeo of drivers. A CARTA driver came in first place and one of the newer drivers in the CareAVan division came in fourth in the state. This week CARTA will be spending some of the stimulus money they received on tearing up asphalt in the parking lots and the shop complex and repaving and also paving areas that are not

currently paved. The larger parking lot will be helpful when the TIPTA Conference comes here in 2012.

Phillip Stevens was welcomed back from his leave of absence with applause by the Council members. He announced that the website was up to date and that the website had one inquiry – the ADA Compliance Officer from Knoxville asked for contact information on the Chattanooga ADA Compliance Officer, Jay Piercy.

John Jackson announced the upcoming Guide Dog and O&M Support Group will be Saturdays at 2:00 and hosted by Terri Rice. The location is still undetermined.

Matt Lea introduced Constance Ruff, President of the Southside Chamber of Commerce. Matt said that Constance is interested in the Council and wanted to see what the Council does.

He then said that there are several members that are not coming to the meetings and as per the bylaws; we need to look at these positions that are not being utilized to their full potential and at those that are currently unfilled. Matt said he has made some calls to veteran's organizations and asked them if they could provide us the names of some disabled veterans that would be good on the Council. The Council still lacks veterans. Most of the disabilities are covered at this time, but we do need someone from the deaf and hard of hearing community. Matt asked that we send names and resumes of anyone that we wish to be considered. He would also like the names of Council members who have not been in attendance for the past three meetings. He asked the Council members to take it upon themselves to promote disability awareness, over and above what is done in our current positions with organizations. Matt said he would really like to see the potential of this Council come to fruition.

There was a complaint voiced regarding the elevator going up to the Walnut Street Bridge being blocked by construction vehicles. It was mentioned that the construction vehicles at the Majestic Theater often blocked curb cuts also. Matt said to call public Works, 311 or him for this type problem. He said if the City is aware of this, they

can also put up a sidewalk closed sign. When calling 311, he advised that it is always important to get the tracking number for follow up. Other complaint include: The crosswalk buttons are often too high for wheelchair users; there are telephone polls in the middle of the sidewalk. Matt reiterated, please call 311.

John asked the audience to introduce themselves:

Bryan Berkeley, UTC Student; Holly Zuckerman, UTC Alumni and OSD Staff; Dennis Dodson, Mental Health Advocate; Constance Ruff, Southside Council of Chattanooga Chamber of commerce; Danielle Hooper, Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association, who announced that her organization received a grant to pay for bicycle helmets for all of the children receiving bicycles from the Forgotten Children's Fund. Also visiting were Chris Jackson, DIDS, Greg Helms, Hamilton County Emergency Management, Greg Smith, Hamilton County Emergency Management, Andy Berke, State Senator for the 10<sup>th</sup> District.

Jill Hindman announced that a hot tub company in Georgia is providing hot tubs for people with spasticity issues at no charge. She said she will give information to Phillip for the website. She also said that the state of TN is having a housing conference in early December including housing for people with disabilities. She will give this information to Phillip, also.

Dennis Dodson, advocate for the mentally ill, said he was concerned that the state has pooled those with other disabilities with those with mental illness in Region 3 meetings. He mentioned that one of the best things that has happened was the Crises Intervention Teams at the Sheriff's Department and the Police Department. The problem is that the 911 Center has failed to participate. They have no procedure to report these incidents. Without keeping information to report, the future for sustainability of the program is in jeopardy. It took 30 years to get this program going. He feels that it would be a shame to lose the funding due to improper reporting.

Matt said he will contact John Stuermer, Director of 911 Center and discuss the need for appropriate policy and procedures for this. He said he will ask John to come before the Council to discuss this and answer questions, maybe some questions about visual disabilities, also. Matt also mentioned that he will get John Allen, Director of Emergency Services to come by and discuss some of these issues, also.

Council members have spoken with Chief Rowe, Fire Department Chief regarding a system to deal with people with disabilities that need emergency services. Matt asked Greg of Hamilton County Emergency Services for an update. He said that a function needs annex was just completed as part of the basic emergency operations plan, that is now at the state for review. These procedures should apply to the 911 Center, but with the recent consolidation, there may be a need to re-train. HIPAA issues were discussed. It was discussed that various number codes had been in use. It was also discussed that some WI-FI channels will be private and not publically accessible. Greg said that some cities are getting away from codes due to confusion between agencies.

Robert announced that the Epilepsy Foundation has a support group meeting for people with epilepsy or family members the first Thursday of every month at 5:30pm at Siskin Hospital. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, there is a holiday party at 6:00 pm at Siskin Hospital. Call 634-1772 to RSVP. Also, November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month. The Epilepsy Foundation is doing a project entitled, Talk About It, which is to educate the public and overcome the stigma and misunderstanding of epilepsy. Carol mentioned the "60 Minutes" segment on the breakthrough of epilepsy treatments. They discussed a brain implant that literally stops epileptic seizures.

Dennis was asked about the sub committee of the Region 3 Council, an ad hoc committee called "The Bridge" to deal with people who have mental illness and who are in jail or prison. Dennis said that as many as 15% of those who are incarcerated may be mentally ill. He said by using CIT Officers, hopefully this will alleviate this problem.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 7th at 3:00 p.m. at the DRC. (Note: This meeting was cancelled due to the holidays. The next meeting will be January 11<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at the DRC.)

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Carol Martin, Secretary  
Mayor's Council on Disability